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## GENAI AND THE DISRUPTIVE INTEGRITY

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*"*One of the most dangerous things
you can believe in this world is that technology is neutral."
*John Dyer*

The launching of Large Language Models (LLM) was an unprecedented phenomenon with conspicuous effects on the human race. Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is the concrete proof of Darwin and Turing's unsettling truth about the human mind: *competence without comprehension* (Dennett, 2017, p. 57). Assessing the impact of this new disruptive technology on ethics in research and education cannot be made sectorial. Due to the *epiphylogenetic* function of technology (Stiegler, 1998) for human evolution and

knowledge, any interpretation implies a sort of self-referentiality. Hence, it is essential to reveal one's theoretical position on technology. I will adopt a strong ethical position on technology. This position is based on the perspective that the development of the human species cannot be delimited from its technological development. Still, no technological (strong) determinism exists in human evolution (see Popoveniuc, 2022). At least until now. Why am I saying this? The ability to make and use tools systematically was not only occasionally related to cognitive development, but the ability of epistemic engineering also allows the employment of technology for substantial life environment alteration and cognitive enhancement. Words are one of the most powerful tools ever, forming the basis of human culture. The AI technology itself is cognitive. Hence, the epistemic, cognitive environment of the human species is technologically changed at its very core.

GenAI has a special place in the technology panoply. From the beginning, it was an emerging disruptive technology (EDT). Its enormous potential for research applications for economic, political, military, and research applications puts it in an uncontrollable and self-enhancing process of development. However, "With great power, there must also come great responsibility," isn't it?

"We should responsibly develop GenAI!" This mantra, publicly repeated by top engineers, political leaders, CEOs, and well-known scientists, is like addicted people's self-encouraging words while they are craving for and are consumed by their addiction. Any "ethical coalition" for healthy development and use of the lethal drug of technological *pharmakon* (Derrida, 1981; Stiegler, 2013) for dealing responsibly with the problem of technological development is similar to climate change initiatives that cannot be efficient as long as leading economic and statal actors are not genuinely committed and foremost, and people overcome the denial state.

We must accept that there is little chance that these three domains (economics, politics, and warfare) would adequately address the issue of ethical GenAI. In these domains, ethics has a very indecorous meaning. It is peculiar to use the proper meaning of the word when you talk about business, political, or warfare ethics. It is a complex

and challenging task to accommodate the ethical demands of human enterprises that have their *raison d'etre* oriented toward making a profit, gaining power, or destroying the enemy (see Benjamin, 1990; Girardin, 2012; Stoker, 1992). Of course, there are many ethical considerations and aspects, and many more individuals have extremely high ethical and moral conduct involved in business, politics, and warfare and, more or less, ethical ways of doing these, but ethics as uncoerced moral self-constraint for the good of the others is at least doubtful. These are social evolutionary cultural structures that, along with technology, are part of the insensitive evolutionary process of human society.

For these considerations, although the economic, political, and security approaches are essential for the sustainable development of emerging disruptive technologies, they will inevitably fail to address the core ethical issues. The pragmatical "AI for profit," "AI for control," and "AI for defense" dominate the "AI for society," the vital human-centered, ethical, and secure approach (Craglia & Europäische Gemeinschaften, 2018). We already see the irresponsible accelerated pace rate of hyper-competition on developing new GenAI-based products, how social media was flooded with GenAI-based political marketing, and how the Gospel artificial wisdom (*Habsora*) transforms people in scientific calculations numbers and decides who will live or die (Davies et al., 2023).

**But what about science?**

Education and Science complement each other. However, I am afraid that scientific ethics and research are also still unprepared to address the question. In the last period of scientific research, the scientific image of the world was infused by its technological tools for studying reality. Computer-based research transforms most of the competence of research in prompt engineering and denatures the scientific paradigm in the face of the image of artificial intelligence. Science is becoming less a human mind science and more a general abstract transliteration of phenomena, strange for natural human intelligence. Cohorts of students and researchers are uncritically trained in computer algorithmic procedures, statistical analysis made by computers and methodologies, and mesmerized by the p signi-

ficance. The understanding is abandoned in favor of formal knowledge suited for computer processing. So, the scientific image is changing into one of generic knowledge and not one of human understanding. The scientific image transformed into an AI image and likeness. The more competent researchers become in handling scientific images, the more their manifest image becomes unfathomable to the human mind (Sellars, 1963).

**What about us, the teachers?**

We must realize and accept that most of our students, from now on, will be on AI drugs, the most potent drug, synthetic intelligence. Here, the ancient meaning of *pharmakon* is revealed in its entire force. We, as teachers, are in a paradoxical position. It is our duty to prescribe this medicine, i.e., AI technologies because it exists and enhances learning and research efficacy. Moreover, our role as teachers is to promote and help students be better suited to the society they will live in. Furthermore, the future will be permeated by AI. At the same time, we cannot control how they will use these drugs. The technological *pharmakon* is very harmful because it causes dependency, can hinder genuine and personal understanding, and can make us take knowledge for understanding mistakenly.

AI is a double-edged tool with both the potential for cure and the risk of poison. People misunderstand technology thinking that it is neutral. But this is false! Melvin Kranzberg (1986) famously said in its first law of technology: "Technology is neither good nor bad; *nor is it neutral*," it is a hybrid, both a remedy and poison, an enhancer and impairer, a *pharmakon*. The social media technologies case is illuminating. They enhanced our abilities and enlarged our possibility for building new communities (online) and new ways of communication. At the same time, it isolated us, destroyed our sense of community, and made us lonely, depressed, and anxious.

**What is it done?**

I already notice two strategies expressing the difference in mentality between the West and East. In my cultural area, the predictable magnitude and impact of GenAI in education, in general, and on academic integrity, in particular, is denied. We do not need so much talk and regulation for this. If we doubled any written

assignment and exam with a short oral interview, "to see if the student knows what they wrote" is enough. My Western colleagues are already actively engaged in the issue. We must prevent the possibility of cheating and foster the abilities for ethical use of GenAi in our students. Realistic, pragmatic, and reasonable. The case is similar to the issue of sexual education classes in schools. While, among European countries, Romania has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy, most of the society, led by the Orthodox Church, the socialist ruling party, and far-right parties, opposed it on the grounds that: "it will corrupt the mind of the young generation." The same rationale underlays the ethics of the AI use approach.

In my view, both strategies are wrong. The first one is obviously catastrophic in the short term. Romanians have this habit of waiting for others to find solutions for everyday problems and, after this, tailoring them to their specific context and circumstances in a "Romanian way". However, we sometimes transform them into disasters because of our adaptations.

However, I consider the second also detrimental, but in the long term. Because it is not a proactive solution but a reactive one. Most of the discourse is, somehow, naïve. Although the impact and inevitability of AI in academia and research are acknowledged, it is evaluated as overoptimistic, considering that the significant impact will be positive, i.e., increasing productivity, creativity, accountability, and misconduct dishonest use will be marginal and exceptional. Technology is ambivalent; it has a hybrid nature, not a neutral one. GenAI's technological advancement is disruptive. The adaptative solutions, although active, will surrender our future to the blind, uncontrollable development of technological progress, ruled by the primitive drives of economic, political, and military reasons. "If in the coming years we do not learn how to produce a *new culture of tekhnē*, *new therapies for pharmaka*, we will send life on this planet to its doom" (Stiegler, 2019, p. 23). The mere adaptation to the advance of technology driven by the basic biological evolutionary forces of the gut, sex, and muscles prompts us to self-destruction in an increasingly technological society. The human zoo (translated more meaningful in Romanian as "zoomenire") (Morris, 1960), driven by slower

evolutionary biological forces, is fate to fade away or self-annihilates into a highly advanced technological environment where technology replaces and supports almost all human physical and cognitive tasks. In education and research, the high dependency on AI tools raises the risk of fostering learned helplessness and low self-efficacy, which entails misuse of them.

**Is there any solution?**

Realistically, I do not know! Looking around at the increasing sympathy for populist parties or fundamentalist and belligerent discourses, our faith that humanity is not fated to self-extinction seems more like wishful thinking.

At this very moment, the researchers and engineers are under the spell of technological power; they live in technological illusory reality, and, in the best case, they search for solutions from within the framework set by the very technological reality, i.e., improper scientific image. Until now, it was only a technologically constructed image driven by human needs. Power technologies have become literal realities in the panoply of smart devices and AI algorithms, advancing from biopower (Foucault, 1980) to psychopower (Stiegler, 2013). AI technologies are transforming the very human cognition and consciousness.

Of course, that scientific image and the manifest image of reality are cultural simulacra collectively constructed. However, artificial intelligence has become the main active dimension in both these images of reality. As the scientific image is the one that provides knowledge that is power, people are slowly renouncing their cognitive autonomy. This is happening gradually but at an increasingly higher pace, and laypeople and scientists are unaware of this. It is a pity that researchers who must be the most attentive are those most deeply immersed under the spell of AI simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994).

What one can deduct from the scientific and philosophical studies on how human morality evolved and functions, from the flaws and shortcomings of judicial and political systems of various regulations and laws, is that the utilitarian or deontological ethical principles will not be suitable for sustainable development of human research and

society further. All rules can be bent, and any calculation utilitarian calculation is not foolproof. The moral usefulness of deontologism and utilitarianism are based on human character, i.e., virtues. The ethics of virtues should be rediscovered, and education should be built on it. Deontologism and consequentialism cannot function properly without engaged and critical characters in the hybrid techno-human world.

With so many opportunities to cheat and use AI to do our job, only the commitment to human virtues with critical thinking and honesty can preserve the fundamental integrity of conduct in science and society at large.

We must be realistic. Hybrid human-AI writing and researching will become routine. Historical definitions of plagiarism and original scientific production would be transcended (Eaton, 2023). The scientific community, the most progressive community for knowledge, is full of harmful phenomena, both systemic and individual: the publish-or-perish culture, lack of transparency and accountability, lack of public engagement, and invocational researchers. The ambivalence of this powerful cognitive technological tool will more likely bend toward misconduct without strong scientific human characters. It is no use fooling ourselves. We are in the face of an evolutionist crossroads that can be seen only if you enlarge our paradigm of understanding and drop to the narrow scientific perspective. It is a humanity-scale endeavor, and the scientists are the priests in charge of this task.

Our humanness relies on our religious beliefs, ideological convictions, and lived cultural differences. But we also kill each other because of them, not because of our STEM debates; this is used only to enhance our destructive power. We need not only to resist technology's negative effects but to take "care" of our inextricable relationship with it (Stiegler, 2013). At this moment, the hope is on in the capacity of universities and the academic community to get rid of the veil of ignorance and fulfill their mission to provide comprehensive education, not only specialized competencies, without comprehension, to foster critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, not only intellectual recipes for problem-solving, to prepare students for lifelong reflective learning, advance deep knowledge and understanding, in order to solve real-

world problems and address global challenges. Last but not least, they must preserve and transmit humanistic knowledge and instill the courage to pursue humanistic ideals. This type of knowledge is the only one on which an integrity character can be built upon. Without integrity, no rules or utilitarian-based social systems can ensure scientific progress's trustiness, ethicalness, and accountability. *Calculus ethics* based on deontological rule-fitness and consequentialist *ethical calculus*, like juridical logic, are vulnerable to outrageous flaws without integrity and inquisitive character. Universities are called to provide the critical mass of critical ethical thinkers able to preserve humanness enhanced by its technology, to capitalize on this most valuable asset of human evolution, in order to ameliorate and evolve, thanks to the more profound human mystery of cultural evolution, beyond the blind evolutionary knowledge blossomed from "live in the immediacy and for preservation"(Blaga, 1937). Otherwise, submitted to the blind forces of technological evolution, the expected flourishing transhumanist epoch (Sorgner, 2020) will represent the end of the human chapter in the history of life on Earth. As we have seen, the change can start only from within the social institutions that had the historical mission from the beginning to nurture integrity character, the universities. However, to accomplish its mission, the academic community should become more aware of what represents the recent historical progress of AI and not only passively adapt and innocently use its opportunities.

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